

**SENATOR ISADORE HALL, III**  
**35<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT**  
**STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 4085 ★ SACRAMENTO, CA 95814**  
**WWW.SENATE.CA.GOV/HALL**

**SB 199 (Hall) IHSS Reading Services for the Blind**  
**FACT SHEET**

**Sponsor:** California Council of the Blind, Jeff Thom, (916) 995-3967

**Staff Contact:** Brian Duke, (916) 651-4035

**ISSUE**

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In-Home Supportive Service (IHSS) consumers receive a variety of domestic care services designed to allow them to remain in their homes rather than receive more expensive care in a residential care facility or skilled nursing facility. Included among these services is personal hygiene assistance, accompaniment during travel to health-related appointments, yard hazard abatement and protective supervision that reduce the need for other supportive services.

County social service departments are responsible for determining a consumer's service eligibility, conducting needs assessments, and the authorization of an IHSS provider to perform the tasks needed by the consumer. Compensation for the worker is determined by each county's established hourly rate for the time necessary for those functions.

Approximately 2% of IHSS consumers, or 10,000 Californians, are legally blind. Unfortunately for these consumers, reading and document completion assistance is not a covered service under IHSS. Reading assistance is critical for consumers who need to know about notices that may affect their ability to live independently, including insurance coverage, prescription drug labels, housing notifications or other time sensitive information that may require action.

**SOLUTION**

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SB 199 would expand the definition of authorized services under the IHSS program to include no more than two hours per month of assistance in reading and completing financial or other documents for IHSS consumers who are blind. Access to these services will be subject to a consumer's needs assessment conducted by county social service departments.

This service is critical for consumers who need to know about notices that may affect their IHSS services, or medical bills, or the terms of prescription medications. Without assistance, those with visual impairments may be unaware of critical information and developments affecting their health and well-being for days or weeks until they find a friend, relative or alternative program to read or complete the documents for them.

**SUPPORT**

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California Council of the Blind (Sponsor)

UDW/AFSCME Local 3930 (Co-Sponsor)

California Association of Public Authorities for IHSS (Co-Sponsor)

AARP

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO  
California Commission on Aging  
California Communities United Institute  
California Senior Legislature  
Congress of California Seniors  
Disability Rights California  
Justice in Aging  
Marin County Commission on Aging  
Personal Assistance Services Council of Los Angeles County  
SEIU California

(As amended 8/28/2015)